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SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958 N/A

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SUBJECT: DAI KUNDI GOVERNOR CONCERNED ABOUT IRANIAN INFLUENCE

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In a meeting with Bamyan PRT officer, Dai Kundi Governor Sultan Ali Oruzgani appealed, on behalf of the people of Dai Kundi, for the U.S. to place a PRT in his province. Governor Oruzgani also expressed concern over increasing Iranian religious influence in mosques in Dai Kundi and throughout Hazarajat. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On August 14, Bamyan PRT officer had a brief meeting with Sultan Ali Oruzgani, the governor of Dai Kundi province, at the governor's office in Nili, the provincial capital. Governor Oruzgani said the people of Dai Kundi had supported the war against the Taliban and al Qaeda and support international efforts to limit poppy cultivation. He emphasized that the people of Dai Kundi would very much like to see a PRT established in the province and specified that it should be a U.S.-led PRT.

¶3. (SBU) Governor Oruzgani then brought up his concern about Iranian influence among Hazara in Afghanistan. He said Iran has historically exercised a lot of influence in Hazarajat, and that many mullahs and clergy in the region were trained in Iran. He said many Hazara clergy are trained in Qum, return to Afghanistan for a time, then go back to Qum for further training. Oruzgani said Iranian-trained mullahs and clergy preach sermons against the Afghan government and the international presence in Afghanistan, and are also trying to influence what is taught in public schools.

¶4. (SBU) Oruzgani said he did not have information about any Iranian efforts to send weapons to Dai Kundi, but commented that the DIAG process in Dai Kundi has not worked. Most people who had weapons during the Taliban days, he claimed, have retained them. The governor repeated his appeal for an American-led PRT, and said that if such a PRT was established it would serve to counter the Iranian influence in Dai Kundi.

¶5. (SBU) Governor Oruzgani indicated that the security situation in the southern district of Kijran, which in the past served as a Taliban staging area, has improved. (Note: A neighboring district, Ghizab, which was part of Dai Kundi province, has been transferred to Uruzgan; Ghizab is considered to be under Taliban control. End note.) Oruzgani noted that just before he became governor, the Taliban had killed the district chief of police in Kijran and effectively taken control of the district. Oruzgani said that after becoming governor he took a series of actions in Kijran including making two visits there, assigning a new district governor and district chief of police, and appointing a district council and

religious council. As a result, he asserted, Kijran is now back in the control of the province and central government. He pointed out that Kijran is situated in an unstable neighborhood; it is located in the middle of three other districts (in Uruzgan, Ghor, and Helmand) where the central government does not exercise authority. We are still concerned about Kijran, he commented, but it is under our control.

¶6. (SBU) Comment: Governor Oruzgani's comments about Iranian influence in Hazarajat are similar to comments recently made to PRT officer by contacts in Bamyan, including the deputy governor and a Provincial Council member. These officials said that while they have no knowledge of Iran sending weapons to individuals or groups in Dai Kundi or Bamyan, they are concerned about anti-government preaching by mullahs and clergy trained in Iran. This concern is not universal: the chairman of the Provincial Council, who was previously the chief mullah in Bamyan province, recently told PRT officer that while Iran used to provide funding for madrassas and mosques in Bamyan, it does not presently provide such funding. The Hazara are Shia, and have traditionally had close religious and cultural ties to Iran. End comment.

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